

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Super Thin Saws

Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center

#### Super Thin Saws Begins the Lean Journey

##### Client Profile:

Super Thin Saws, formerly known as Schultz Tool Sharpening, was founded by John Schultz in 1976 as a small local tool and sharpening business. Serving woodworkers in Northern Vermont and New Hampshire, the company began to enjoy a reputation for doing high quality work. Steady growth of custom saw blade manufacturing for large industrial woodworking companies and continued commitment to high quality service allowed Super Thin Saws to expand its reputation beyond New England. The rising cost of wood gradually created a greater need for accurate, thin cutting saw blades. Today, Super Thin Saws employs 21 people at its Waterbury, Vermont, facility.

##### Situation:

As a leader in the manufacturing and service of thin kerf saw blades, Super Thin Saws was challenged to match shop capacity with the increasing amount of customer demands. Sales were increasing and customers required faster turnaround times for saw blade servicing as well the manufacturing of new saw blades. Super Thin Saws decided to work with the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center (VMEC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, and begin implementing a Lean Manufacturing System.

##### Solution:

After some employees of Super Thin Saws attended a Lean Manufacturing Principles workshop, VMEC facilitated a Value Stream Mapping session. This became the foundation for implementing the Lean Manufacturing System techniques. Once the Value Stream Map was created and improvement projects were identified (kaizens), implementation began right away. In fact, within 12 hours of completing the value stream map, some employees moved a piece of equipment for the purpose of material flow and reduced lead times by 2 days. VMEC and Super Thin Saws continued to work together on kaizen implementation. Despite being extremely busy on the production floor, the team at Super Thin Saws made the time to implement changes. "I give Dave Strom a lot of credit. He would take his teams off production for several hours so that they could make improvements to the production area," said Sean Jordan, VMEC Professional Manufacturing Advisor.

##### Results:

- \* Reduced turnaround time for servicing of saw blades by 60 percent.
- \* Increased quantities shipped by 50 percent.
- \* Reduced back-log orders.
- \* Retained and increased sales by \$425,000.

##### Testimonial:

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